IN THE CLAIMS

- (Original) A method comprising:
 determining contour requirements from a plurality of factors; and
 based on the contour requirements, one of:
 - generating at least one standard content-derived signature contour from at least one of a content identifier and a second content-derived signature contour, and generating at least one optimized content-derived signature contour from contour-related data and at least one content-derived signature contour.
- 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one content-derived signature contour is expanded.
- 3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the expanded at least one content-derived signature contour is derived from a recursively determined content identifier tree.
- 4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is derived from at least one of:
- a differential contour derived from a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of differential data,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a contour patch,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a contour override,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a transform contour,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion content access metadata,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of content access metadata, and
- a content-derived signature contour modified to optimize one of size and contents to one of decrease bandwidth and increase redundancy.

- 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is a restoration contour, wherein the restoration contour includes at least one of metadata, a content identifier, a local media descriptor, and a contour patch.
- 6. (Original) The method of claim 1, the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is a factored contour, wherein the factored contour includes at least a single metadata object that represents metadata for a plurality of articles.
- 7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the contour requirements include: at least one of computational complexity, storage capacity, cost, communication bandwidth, communication latency, and contents of reference contours.
- 8. (Original) A method comprising:

requesting one of at least one content-derived signature contour and at least one optimized content-derived signature contour, the content-derived signature contour including one of a plurality of content identifiers and at least one content-derived signature contour, and the optimized content-derived signature contour is derived from contour-related data and one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and a derivation from the at least one content-derived signature contour;

determining if one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is present on at least one device;

dynamically creating one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour if it is determined that one of the at least one content-derived signature

contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is not present on the at least one device,

returning one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour if one of the at least one content-derived signature

contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is determined to be present on the at least one device; and

transmitting client contour identifications (CCIDs).

- 9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein a plurality of representations of one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour are returned.
- 10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is originally stored on one of the at least one device and a source device, wherein the source device is one of local and remote to the at least one device.
- 11. (Original) An apparatus comprising a machine-readable medium containing instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform operations comprising:

determining contour requirements from a plurality of factors,

based on the plurality of factors, one of:

generating at least one content-derived signature contour from one of a plurality of content identifiers and at least one content-derived signature contour, and

generating at least one optimized content-derived signature contour from contour-related data and one of said at least one content-derived signature contour and a derivation from said at least one content-derived signature contour.

- 12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the at least one content-derived signature contour is expanded.
- 13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the expanded at least one contentderived signature contour is derived from a recursively determined content identifier tree.

- 14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the at least one optimized contentderived signature contour includes at least one of:
- a differential contour derived from a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of differential contour data,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a contour patch,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a contour override,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a transform contour,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion content access metadata.
- 15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is a restoration contour, wherein the restoration contour includes at least one of metadata, content identifiers, a local media descriptor, and at least one contour patch.
- 16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is a factored contour, wherein the factored contour includes at least a single metadata object that represents metadata for a plurality of articles.
- 17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour reside on one of at least two separate devices and one device.
- 18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour are stored on one of the at least one device and a source device, wherein the source device is one of local and remote to the at least one device.
- 19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour are originally stored on one of the at least one device and a source device, wherein the source device is one of local and remote to the at least one device.

20. (Original) An apparatus comprising a machine-readable medium containing instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform operations comprising:

requesting one of at least one content-derived signature contour and at least one optimized content-derived signature contour, the content-derived signature contour including one of a plurality of content identifiers and at least one content-derived signature contour, and the optimized content-derived signature contour is derived from contour-related data and one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and a derivation from the at least one content-derived signature contour;

determining if one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is present on at least one device,

dynamically creating one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour if it is determined that one of the at least one content-derived signature

contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is not present on the at least one device, and

returning one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour if one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is determined to be present on the at least one device.

- 21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein a plurality of representations of one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour are returned.
- 22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is originally stored on one of the at least one device and a source device, wherein the source device is one of local and remote to the at least one device.

23. (Original) A system comprising:

a plurality of devices coupled to a transmission medium, each of the plurality of devices coupled with a first process and a second process and having one of at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour,

wherein the first process:

determines contour requirements from a plurality of factors,

based on the plurality of factors, one of:

generates at least one content-derived signature contour from one of a plurality of content identifiers and at least one content-derived signature contour, and

generates at least one optimized content-derived signature contour from contour-related data and one of said at least one content-derived signature contour and a derivation from said at least one content-derived signature contour; and

stores one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour., and

wherein the second process:

requests one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour, the content-derived signature contour including one of a plurality of content identifiers and at least one content-derived signature contour, and the optimized content-derived signature contour is derived from contour-related data and one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and a derivation from the at least one content-derived signature contour;

determines if one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is present on at least one device,

dynamically creating one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour if it is determined that one of the at least one content-derived signature

contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is not present on the at least one device

returns one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour.

- 24. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the at least one content-derived signature contour is expanded.
- 25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the expanded at least one content-derived signature contour is derived from a recursively determined content identifier tree.
- 26. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the at least one optimized contentderived signature contour includes at least one of:
- a differential contour derived from a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of differential contour data,
 - a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a contour patch, a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a contour override, a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion of a transform contour, a content-derived signature contour and at least a portion content access metadata.
- 27. (Original) The system of claim 23, the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is a restoration contour, wherein the restoration contour includes at least one of metadata, content identifiers, a local media descriptor, and at least one contour patch.
- 28. (Original) The system of claim 23, the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is a factored contour, wherein the factored contour includes at least a single metadata object that represents metadata for a plurality of articles.
- 29. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein a plurality of representations of one of the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour are returned.

- 30. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the at least one content-derived signature contour and the at least one optimized content-derived signature contour is originally stored on one of the at least one device and a source device, wherein the source device is one of local and remote to the at least one device.
- 31. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the factors include: at least one of storage capacity, cost, and throughput.